

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

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LIMDIS

GUATEMALA PASS ROCAP

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ELAB, HO

SUBJECT: CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN GOH-HONDURAS LABOR LEADER
RELATIONSHIPS

1. HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELLANO ON OCTOBER 24, 1974 SHARED WITH ME HIS GREAT CONCERNS OVER THE STRAINED LABOR-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOPING AS ONE MORE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE FIFI. HE SAID THAT THE RAVAGES OF THE HURRICANE HAD PUT MANY MEMBERS OF LABOR UNIONS OUT OF WORK AND THAT "DEMOCRATICALLY INCLINED" LABOR LEADERS ARE FINDING THEMSELVES BESEIGED BY THEIR MEMBERSHIPS, CLAIMING THAT THE LABOR LEADERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEM OR UNABLE TO INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR NEEDS. GENERAL LOPEZ SAID THAT COMMUNIST

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ACTIVISTS ARE WORKING FRANTICALLY TO CONVINCE

WORKERS THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO TOPPLE THOSE
LEADERS WHO ARE "GOING TO BED WITH THE REACTIONARY
MILITARY GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND THE IMPERALISTS".

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, GENERAL LOPEZ SAID THAT HE
HAS RECENTLY ACCEDED TO SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH THE
LEADERSHIP OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR (COHEP) TO HEAR
THEIR DEMANDS, AND THAT KNOWLEDGE OF THESE MEETINGS
HAS BEEN USED BY AGITATORS AS EVIDENCE THAT OLA
FAVORS COHEP AND IS PLANNING TO "SELL OUT" THE
DISPOSSESSED MASSES (MASAS DISPOSEIDAS).

COMMENT: THIS IS PARTICULARLY IRONIC, SINCE HE
DESCRIBED HIS MEETINGS WITH COHEP AS BEING ABSOLUTELY
UNPRODUCTIVE BECAUSE COHEP DEMANDS INCLUDED A
SWEEPING ABOLITION OF PRICE CONTROLS, AND A COMPLETE
ABANDONMENT OF ANY VERSION OF AGARIAN REFORM.

3. GENERAL LOPEZ SAID THAT AS THE RESPONSIBLE LABOR
LEADERSHIP IN HONDURAS CONTINUES TO LOSE GROUND THERE
IS NO TELLING WHAT FORMS OF UNREST AND AGITATION MAY
AWAIT THE COUNTRY. COMMENT: AT ONE POINT THE GENERAL
EVEN CONFIDED THAT THE GOH HAD ORDERED A BOMB EXPLODED
AT PT. CORTES IN ORDER TO BLAME IT ON "COMMUNIST
AGITATORS".

4. I ASKED THE GENERAL IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEVELOPED
ANY SPECIFIC PLANS FOR DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM. HE
ANSWERED THAT AS SOON AS RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES GOT
UNDERWAY HE WAS GOING TO SEE IF HE COULD CARVE OUT
SOME VISIBLE ROLES FOR CERTAIN LABOR LEADERS. GENERAL
LOPEZ SAID ALSO THAT LABOR AND PEASANT GROUPS WERE
NOW DEMANDING A COMPLETELY CONFISCATORY AGARIAN
REFORM LAW WHILE COHEP WAS MILITATING AGAINST ANY
AGARIAN REFORM AT ALL. BECAUSE OF THIS GENERAL
LOPEZ SAYS HE IS CONSIDERING A TWO YEAR EXTENSION
OF DEGREE NO. 8 AS AN INTERIM COMPROMISE.
SANCHEZ

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